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Notes of the Month.

We publish in this issue the second of the special articles dealing with "Religion and Modern Thought." There is no need to emphasise the importance of the subject with which it deals, but we trust it will prove helpful to those of our readers whose religious point of view has been disturbed by critical conclusions concerning the Bible. But perhaps none of them have been in the position of an ultra-orthodox minister who, on hearing for the first time the rather extreme critical conclusions of an advanced German professor, complained that after listening to him he found all kinds of strange things revolving in his head!

* *

As contra-distinguished from a love of the startling and the strange, we would refer to the sound critical work of a great Anglican scholar, Canon S. R. Driver, whose quite recent death is so deservedly regretted. At first quite conservative in his attitude to modern scholarship, especially that of Germany, he came to recognise the need and the validity of criticism as an aid to the true understanding of the Bible. Possessing scholarly gifts second to none in Great Britain, he applied them whole-heartedly to the cause of biblical study and research, and in consequence made British scholarship widely respected. His "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," which first appeared in 1891, has since passed through several editions, and is not likely to be soon superseded as a book of real value to the biblical student. Other works, like his "Commentary on the Book of Genesis," were similarly characterised by sound and cautious scholarship. Thanks largely to him and his work, many who were at first distrustful, and thought of criticism as a means of undermining the faith, thankfully accepted it as a handmaid of religion.

* *

An important issue of particular interest to men in revolt against orthodox theology is raised in a recent book, "Our Task in India: Shall we Proselytise Hindus or Evangelise India?" by Bernard Lucas. The writer's contention is that to seek to win men's adherence to certain theological con-

ceptions rather than to make them citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, is not alone to court failure, it is to misinterpret the spiritual attitude and aim of the founder of Christianity. The issue is emphasised and illustrated in this striking and suggestive way. Taking the case of the rich young ruler and his treatment by Jesus, as reported in the New Testament, he contrasts the essentially different treatment dictated by western theological conceptions :—" 'Young man,' Mr. Lucas thinks Jesus (as re presented by modern orthodoxy) would have answered the rich young ruler, 'you are entirely wrong in that conception of the Godhead which your Judaism has taught you. God is not the one and only God you have been erroneously taught to think. The Godhead is a unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all three co-equal and co-eternal. There are, however, not three Gods, but one God in three persons. The Son is of the same substance as the Father, and I that speak unto thee am He. As for your conception of inheriting eternal life, you must realise that the only thing you do inherit is the corrupt nature of Adam, which is deserving of eternal punishment. God, however, has provided a way of escape by allowing someone else to take your place and bear your punishment for you. He has arranged that I, His well-beloved Son, should satisfy the demands of justice on your behalf, and the death which I am about to suffer in Jerusalem on the cross is that satisfaction of the claims of justice, without which God the Father cannot forgive your sins. If you acquiesce in this substitution of the innocent for the guilty, believe in me as your Saviour, and trust to the merits of my death, you will undoubtedly be saved, and obtain by the free grace of God that eternal life which you are seeking.'" Twenty-five years' missionary experience in India has convinced Mr. Lucas that such a substitution for Jesus and his Gospel does not win the heathen. We are equally convinced that it awakens little sympathy even amongst intelligent Christians at home.

When the previous Notes were in type and about to be printed, we learned with profound sorrow the sad news of the sudden death of the Lord Mayor of Belfast. Along with so many others we deplore most deeply this unexpected end to an honourable and useful public career. He will be most difficult to replace, for he laboured long and strenuously for the public good. Widespread sympathy will be manifested for the bereaved widow who shared his labours so devotedly, as well as for his family.

RELIGION AND MODERN THOUGHT

II. The Bible and Modern Criticism.

In the first article of this series which appeared last month it is affirmed that "criticism has revealed a new Bible." We propose to make good that contention and to illustrate its bearing upon modern religion. But it is desirable first to remove from the matter, as well as from our minds, anything antagonistic or derogatory in the word "criticism." By the latter, we are to understand a reasoned examination, a careful judgment brought to bear upon the books of the Bible. It is the painstaking endeavour of the trained scholar, availing himself of the accumulated resources of modern biblical scholarship, to cast light upon the sacred literature in which our faith is transmitted. As such, it is concerned with two branches of investigation, which are usually distinguished as Lower and Higher Criticism. The first of these seeks to establish the text on which our English version is based. Hence it is also known as Textual Criticism. Why it is essential is easily perceived. Our biblical books are not productions of yesterday, but of a far distant period. They have come down to us through many hands and as the outcome of many wonderful and often complicated processes. Consequently, we are bound to ask if in their passage through the centuries the treasures transmitted have remained the same. Has there been any admixture of human specula-

tion, any faulty copying of the earlier texts, any incorrect translations of the latter into our current speech? All these, to mention no other, are possible sources of error, and since, even in the most sacred of undertakings, men's proneness to err cannot be wholly eliminated, we must allow for such possibility. But, further, we have to bear in mind that our version of the Bible is not based on a few early texts, but upon innumerable texts, some early and some late, and all of differing value. In comparatively recent times some of our most trustworthy sources have come to light, and have provided modern scholars with materials unknown to their predecessors. Thus, the so-called Received Text, i.e., the Greek text which determined the character of all the ordinary copies of the Greek Bible in England down to quite recent times, goes back to the year 1550. But since then simply enormous discoveries have been made, enriching our available materials, and proving incontestably the imperative need of a new, up-to-date text which shall incorporate all recently-acquired knowledge. And since the translations on which we relied only dealt with the early and defective Greek text, a two-fold task confronted the modern critic: (1) To create and publish an accurate Greek text as nearly resembling the earliest Christian records as was humanly possible. (2) To prepare by the aid of this new and accurate text equally accurate and up-to-date versions which modern readers could read in their mother speech. The manner in which that two-fold task has been undertaken and carried out reflects the greatest credit upon the scholars of many lands, all giving themselves whole-heartedly to its accomplishment. As a consequence, we may say, both as regards the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New, that they have been brought much nearer final correctness and completeness than was ever the case before. Moreover, in Great Britain, in Germany, and in other lands new versions have been prepared which, from the standpoint of accuracy, mark an immense advance upon all earlier versions of the originals.

Now, although this means much for which we cannot be too grateful, something more was necessary. Granted the need of a careful and correct text, such as the Lower or Textual Critic was able to supply, even that did not suffice to satisfy an intelligent reader. For while he wished to have in his hands and read a text true to early Christian usage, he wished also to be in a position to understand what he read, as they who used the early text understood it. Taking note of the religious differences of to-day, he was conscious of the fact that these were quite compatible with, and claimed to be derived from, the use of a common text or version of the Bible. Who then was to decide which of these differing conclusions was correct? Surely the first essential was to ask: How did they, the pioneers of Christianity, understand these things? What was the nature of their thought-world, their mode of life, their outlook upon the great verities of religion and morality? Granted a clear picture of the early starting point of the Christian movement, the greater the possibility of estimating the truth or otherwise of a later standpoint claimed to be derived therefrom. Thus, to satisfy such a need, it was desirable to go behind the actual text, even if that were the earliest possible, and take note of the antecedent conditions of thought and experience which called that text into being. Putting the matter figuratively, we may say: Above and behind the written word or text we can trace back a stream of tendency whose watershed is the life-experience of the Jewish people. He who, equipped with fitting instruments of observation and examination, goes back to the source of that stream, takes note of its surroundings, enters into conversation with those dwelling in its proximity, is the so-called Higher Critic. That is to say, his criticism precedes in time and place that of the merely Textual Critic, and deals with the antecedent conditions of which the text is at once the expression and the interpretation. Obviously the task of such Higher Critic seems more important and more attractive in the view of the intelligent reader. The question of the text is imperative,

but suggests the atmosphere of the study—that of the life behind the text has all the uplift and the vivid interest of human doings. How much we desire to know the Palestine of Jesus' day, how great the gain if we can see pass across the stage of our mental world the form and features of him who spake as no man spake ! Thanks to many devoted fellow-workers, the possibilities of such a consummation have been brought nearer than ever before. We modern men and women can, if we will, enter into that early life more completely than our fathers could, with consequent gain for our understanding of the Bible, its personages and its episodes. And surely we, to whom the Life of Lives means so much, will not withhold our meed of praise to the Higher Critics who have brought this about !

For the purpose of making plain the task undertaken by Biblical criticism, we have tried to differentiate its functions and the objects of its investigation. Let us now emphasise the fact that in reality the two kinds of criticism —Higher and Lower—are interdependent. They work together as allies, and both often find their unity and their expression in the work of one man. He who deals with the sources and the environment of early Christianity must many a time and oft make comparison between what he has observed and that which he finds expressed in the text. Such comparison again and again throws light upon something which at first sight appears strange. Jesus, for example, is credited in the Gospels with the performing of miracles. That fact is put to the proof by the Higher Critic. He seeks to examine it, not in the light of modern rationalism, but in that of contemporary Jewish belief. He finds that the expectation of, and the belief in, the doing of mighty works is the most real of things. A naive outlook upon nature, a complete absence of any clearly defined demarcation of the natural from the supernatural—these constitute the very texture of eastern thought and speculation. On the other hand, the Lower or Textual Critic must be something more, or his work is incomplete and unconvincing. Thus, it is the two kinds of criticism working together which leads to the most fruitful results, and the co-operation of both has provided for modern readers what is to all intents and purposes a new Bible.

In the remaining part of this article we propose to illustrate the foregoing by focussing attention on certain things helpful to the intelligent use of the Bible :—

(1) The Bible must be comprehended in the light of what both in origin and in contents it is proved to be, viz., an incomparable collection of writings, due to different authors, and drawn from different periods of history, exhibiting God's progressive revelations to mankind through the medium of a particular people. These revelations concern morality and religion—not a scientific explanation of the world.

(2) The books which comprise the Bible are not arranged in the order of their origin, nor are they always the work of the persons whose names they bear. Thus when we speak of " the Law and the Prophets " the order is not one of time, for much that appears in the books of the Law is undoubtedly later than the work of some of the Hebrew prophets. Such, therefore, cannot be the work of Moses or be contemporaneous with him. Again, the book of Daniel is not the production of the prophet Daniel, nor is it given in chronological order in our Old Testament. It is perhaps the latest of the Old Testament books, and can only be sympathetically studied in the light of its true historical setting.

(3) Single books of the Bible sometimes possess only an apparent unity, and are actually compilations, comprising materials due to varied authors and drawn from different periods of history. Thus, the book of Psalms comprises psalms composed by many psalmists, extending over centuries of time ; the book of Isaiah

contains the work of at least three prophetical writers who lived under different historical conditions ; the book of Job has long insertions, notably the speeches of Elihu, which form no part of the original work. As regards the New Testament, similar characteristics, though not to the same extent, can be perceived. Matthew and Luke embody particulars for which they are indebted to the earliest Gospel, Mark, and also make use of a collection of the sayings of Jesus, of which Mark makes little, if any, use. Luke, again, incorporates materials of which both Mark and Matthew appear to be ignorant.

(4) The division of the biblical books into chapters and verses, while convenient in use, may be misleading in act. The spirit of a writing cannot be grasped in tit-bit selections, but in its entirety, illuminated by knowledge of its nature and purpose. Thus, a Pauline epistle must be read—as we would read a modern letter—in its completeness, and in view of its place and importance in the writer's life and labours.

(5) To treat the Bible as literature, and to read it with ready response to its literary power and appeal, is not to ignore its intrinsic moral and spiritual greatness. Rather is it to rise from one's reading more and more attuned to the keynote of strong and resolute living for God and for man which it strikes. The neglect of the Bible, of which so many complain to-day, would be a thing of the past if the Bible were approached and studied with intelligence and sympathy. Modern criticism has made that increasingly possible, and many, amongst whom the present writer would include himself, have found in the Bible of to-day an incomparable aid to holy and virtuous living, as well as the world's greatest literature.

EASTER.

WHILE many liberal Christians are wondering what to make of Easter, the very season is explaining it to us. The fast of Lent, with its glad culmination in the Festival of the Resurrection, can never be properly understood except in association with the spring. The word "Lent" means "spring," and therefore the festival which so many Christians keep is in its origin the festival of spring. It is quite a delusion to suppose that interest in nature is of modern growth. From the very first men were inevitably interested in nature, in the procession of the seasons, and the mystery of life. In the spring they saw the trees, which through the winter had been as dead, send forth new buds of life, and the seed which had been planted in the dark earth peep through with the green promise of harvest. The renewal of life each spring was a miracle, and they never felt quite sure that it would happen again. So they instituted religious ceremonies with the object of assuring themselves of the regular recurrence of the fruitfulness of earth. Death, and burial, and resurrection played a great part in these ceremonies, and right up to, and beyond the Christian era, the spring festival held an honoured place in many lands and climes.

It so happened, however, that according to the Gospel records the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ fell in the spring, and therefore with the spread of Christianity the spring festival took on a higher and more spiritual character. Beforetime men had celebrated the resurrection of natural life, the coming of the fruit and grain, which constitute our daily bread. But "man does not live by bread alone." Though a creature of earth, his destiny is heaven, and the Christian spring celebrates the resurrection of spiritual life, the coming of the Eternal Christ, who is the Life, the Truth, the Way. It is futile to boggle over the historicity of the Gospel narratives, and refuse to celebrate Easter because we cannot be sure that Jesus rose on the third day

in a visible and tangible form. The whole order of nature sets itself against such scepticism. The spring is a constant proof that life is continually renewed, and that that which was dead is alive again. If the lot of Jesus is worse than that of a seed of corn ; if the soul that inspired him and brought salvation to men is more liable to death than the germ in the seed, then we might as well give up religion altogether. At the present moment gardens and fields are gay with clumps of golden Lent lilies, which but a short while ago were dried-up bulbs. That is a miracle indeed, and a miracle, moreover, we accept. But its acceptance should make it easier to accept the miracle of the soul's spring festival. The Resurrection may not have happened just as the Gospel records, but the Resurrection must have happened in some shape or form, "else is our preaching vain." We cannot say how it happened, nor can we say how anything happens ; but this we know, that the death of the body of Jesus meant the resurrection of the spirit of Christ. The Christian Church, and the spiritual consolations and achievements she constantly supplies, are the actual proof that Christ is risen. We cannot behold him sitting on the right hand of God in heaven, but we can feel his presence in our hearts, and that presence leads us to heaven. It is your sceptic, and not your religious man who asks for the impossible. He says : "show me Christ in heaven and I will believe." The religious man is content with the miracle of Christ in his heart, because that makes his heart a heaven, makes the world also a heaven, and intimates the existence of a heaven beyond and above the world, whence come all the Christlike influences that are gradually transforming the world. The Resurrection is not the departure of Christ from the world, but the uprising of Christ within the world. Jesus himself promised this : "I will not leave you desolate ; I come unto you. . . If a man love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Is not this Resurrection miracle enough ? If from dust-created man can arise a spiritual man ; if the death of the earthly Jesus means the extended life of the eternal Christ, can we not go a step further and believe that the spiritual will never pass away with the material ? In other words, if we can, and must, believe that Christ lives with man, cannot we, must we not, believe that he also lives with God ? And if he lives, then we live also, for he is the first fruits of the dead ; we are the harvest. Let us, then, put away the superstitions and the prejudices which keep us from a right appreciation of the mystery of the Passion, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection ! Earth's springtime provides us with an analogy. We accept that, we rejoice in that, and we are blind if we do not accept and rejoice in the springtime of the soul. The Passion and the Crucifixion of Jesus are the passion and crucifixion of the natural man in all divine humanity. When Jesus suffers and dies, we suffer and die with him, and his burial sees the burial of our material selves. But Easter day, with its Resurrection of the Eternal Christ, is the resurrection of all humanity into the glorious destiny of the children of God.

A NEW VIEW OF ORDINATION.

By John Campbell, M.A., M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.S., Eng.

"Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God."—Lev. xxi. 17.

THE Church of England is in commotion over the question as to whether people who have not been confirmed are to be allowed to sit at the table of the Lord's Supper, and receive the Sacrament from the hands of the Episcopal clergy. At the same time a Royal Commission is sitting to take evidence as to the best means of preventing the spread of certain diseases. The medical officers of lunatic asylums

are pointing out what a large proportion of insanity is due to one of these diseases, and the medical journals are emphasising the important part such diseases play in producing ill health in men and women. As the existence of these diseases is a moral and social problem of the greatest moment, it is surely a very strange thing that the greatest Church in the United Kingdom is giving a front place to a matter of little or no importance to the moral and spiritual development of mankind, and is leaving one of the crying evils of modern life to be dealt with by the Government and the medical profession. Nor can blame in this regard be attached to the Church of England alone. All the large and popular denominations agree with it in putting questions of doctrine and ritual in the forefront. What does this mean? Is the popular exposition of Christianity ineffective in producing morality? Facts would almost justify an affirmative reply. The situation is a desperate one. Fifteen to twenty per cent. of insanity in large cities is caused by one of these diseases. "One third of pathology" is furnished by the same disease, and almost one-half of the diseases peculiar to women is said to be due to a kindred affection (*British Medical Journal*, Feb. 21, 1914, pp. 434 and 440). In the face of these facts, some active measures are urgently required. Nothing which the Government and the medical profession can do will effect more than a limitation of the spread of the evil. The prime necessity is the application of all the forces of religion to strengthen the moral character of the people. It is difficult to enlist the co-operation of the large and popular churches, because their whole-hearted espousal of the cause would lead to the abandonment of some of the doctrinal ideas which they hold dear. It is impossible for the smaller denominations, which make a strong feature of the development of character, to influence any large number of persons, because their tenets are not acceptable to the masses. The following suggestion aims at taking at least one step forward. In character and conduct the clergy and ministers of all denominations are very far above the average of men. To focus the attention of the whole country on this fact would not only enhance the present moral influence of the clergy, but would also set them before other men as examples of the moral ideal which all should aim to reach. This can be done by making it obligatory on every candidate for license to preach or for ordination to produce a medical certificate showing that he has no signs of having at any time had any of the diseases to which reference has herein been made. With our present improved methods of investigation, such a certificate could be easily procured, and would be of great value. It would emphasise in a very strong way to the whole world the supreme importance which the churches attach to purity of life, and would prevent subscription to doctrine from looming so large on the religious horizon as it has hitherto done. Our Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church might frame a memorial to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and send over a small deputation to present it to him. If his Church could be induced to take such action, its great position in the State, and its social influence would at once induce the large Nonconformist bodies to follow its lead. A great forward movement would thus be inaugurated.

THE CHILD AND THE CHURCH.

By Duket Hall.

UNDER the above heading the editor of *The British Weekly* publishes a valuable article which raises questions of great importance to all religious denominations. He points out how the early subtle influence of the character of the parent or nurse, commencing even before the infant can speak, will leave an indelible imprint on the mind of the child, and he emphasises the necessity for religious culture from the very earliest period. With this sentiment everyone will agree. The difficulty is to get it put into practice.

Servants, nursemaids, and nursery governesses seldom exercise a good influence on the children in their charge. They so frequently give way to petty lying and paltry deceit that the child lives in a vitiated moral atmosphere so long as he is under their care. The more active his brain and the quicker his intelligence, the greater the harm he is likely to get from such an environment. Now these women are typical of the class from which they come, a class which includes the great mass of the people. They are not irreligious, as religion is commonly understood. Many of them are, indeed, devotees of the sect to which they belong, yet their religious training has failed to make them truthful and straightforward. Their influence on children is pernicious in the extreme. When women of this type become mothers they transmit to their offspring their own crooked tendencies. The only corrective for this state of things is a complete change in the method of religious instruction, a change by which the full force of religious sentiment and emotion may be brought to bear directly on the development of character. Needless to say, *The British Weekly* does not suggest this root and branch way of overcoming the evil.

The writer proceeds to say that "the tendency is to believe that children must grow up unconverted, and that sometime after childhood has passed they may experience a Divine *ictus*, preceded by convictions and struggles." Surely the whole orthodox system of belief encourages that tendency. The trend of orthodoxy is to belittle the importance of development of character and to minimise the value of conduct in favour of other things. The doctrine of original sin, with its antidote, the doctrine of the Atonement by the vicarious sufferings of Christ, naturally imbues the mind of the multitude with what Carnegie Simpson calls a "spurious evangel," and lessens our feeling of personal responsibility for our actions. So long as the churches maintain their present standards of belief unrevised the people cannot help themselves. "The universal spread of the Gospel, and the universal reign of Christ can never be compassed by the process of adult conversions, but must be finally reached, if reached at all, by the populating forces of a family grace in the Church. It can never come so long as the children of the world grow up in sin, as we now assume to be the fact." Such a thoroughly Unitarian expression of opinion, coming from a champion of orthodoxy, is most welcome. The revision of the Shorter Catechism, and the beginning of a new and better era may be near at hand. "Blindness has happened in part in Israel, and it is time that this blindness should pass away" This is a statement with which we Non-Subscribing Presbyterians will cordially agree.

Now, what about our own part in this matter? Are we doing our duty by our own young people? Not quite. We have no five points of Calvinism to trouble us. Untrammelled by useless theological theories, we can devote ourselves to the practical issues of religious life along the lines which Jesus has laid down for us. We should, therefore, throw ourselves with all the more ardour into the training of our children. We should by example and precept direct their thoughts to God, and instil into their minds reverence and filial affection for Him. More religious teaching at home, more enthusiasm in the Sunday School; above all things, more punctilious attendance, both of adults and children, on public worship, are essential for this. For the sake of the children we must do better than we have done.

INSPIRATION.

By Rev. John Barron.

GOD'S prophets have been many, and every time and every race has had them—men who have caught the seraphic fire and hymned the praises of the Supreme, and kindled the flame of devotion in the hearts of their countrymen. What a poor thing inspiration would be if only one little nation in the whole world, hundreds of

years ago, got it, and nobody else ever had it before or since ! The beauty of the Lord is everywhere, and the souls of Hebrews and Eastern and Western men and women have been filled with it. It has been voiced everywhere throughout every nation and language. Not only in writing, but in the work of man's hands, in sculpture, in painting, in the craftsman's art, it has expressed itself. From deep beneath the sands are unearthed fragments of rare beauty, pillars and temples and rolls containing writings which show how the flood of inspiration was unstinted then, as now, words which deserve to be put alongside anything that any Old Testament writer ever wrote, because of the power that is in them, words that have come hot welling up from the heart.

Carlyle said that "he in whom the Spirit of God breathes with higher potentiality than in his fellows, he, and he alone, is the true priest of men, whether men get him ordained to the office or not."

Around us and about us is the Divine Spirit, which ever witnesses with ours, moving us not in one way only, but in many. We sit in a vast hall of some large city; from floor to ceiling the building is crowded, gallery above gallery. Under the marvellous spell of the orator, the audience becomes one, and can be played on like an instrument by skilful musician. Not a movement is made, as under breathless tension every word is eagerly caught. More and more intense grows the influence, and, beyond and through the spoken words, are flashed ideas greater than language can convey. In that uplifted hour there is understanding, difficult things are made easy, high feelings are evoked, the inspiration comes like a flood over the assembly. And when it is over, and become a memory, there is a feeling of being down in the valley again. That is a form of inspiration.

"I walked alone once from the top of Mount Washington," said Henry Ward Beecher, "and I know not what strange ecstacy fell upon me. But I saw all the land, the towns, and fields and villages beneath me; and in that uplifted moment contradictions were reconciled, difficult problems were made clear, and I understood as I had never understood before. When I am down again in the valley, where all the attritions of life are felt, I remember that I once had it."

In the presence of natural beauty, in the quietness of a cathedral into which you have strayed, where perhaps the organist is preparing the anthem for the coming service, and music, with its mysterious power, appeals to you, with pillar and arch and stained-glass window. Music, colour, form—instruments of the Spirit, and, most potent of all, human speech ! The Word has gone out through all the earth. And there came one through whom that Word found voice, as it never has done since, for it possessed him so utterly that the Word in him was made flesh and its glory revealed. In the beauty of his soul all else became beautiful—lilies of the valley and birds, palm tree and way-side well ! He spoke as never man spoke, and the crowds, drawn to him by a strange, sweet stirring, left their towns and villages to follow him into desert places.

The mists of centuries have obscured the events of that life. Mythology, mysticism are woven into the narrative. But Christ-like words, with the Christ spirit in them, are preserved to us, and life and immortality are brought to light.

The light flowed unimpeded through his purity, his compassion, his wisdom. Even so ! But the light lightens every man born into the world. If you and I do not feel the inspiration it is not because it is absent; it is there all the time, radiating on us as steadily as the sun does upon the earth which covers the seed, penetrating its heart in time and stirring the slumbering life.

We need just to put ourselves in the attitude for receiving it, an attitude which may be described in two words: kindliness and common sense. With just the exercise of these, what a change would soon come over the world. The problems, labour difficulties, social evils, which the newspapers tell us of every day, and which we know for

ourselves, would vanish—vanish like the mists of the morning before the rising sun.

How easy then to let the inspiration come in ; and, though we may not write or speak in public under it, or do what artist or skilled musician may do, yet the inspiration is a power in our lives, nerving us to do with new motive what we have to do, nerving us to endure, and to go on with braver heart, meeting every day as it comes ; and, through our influence, in ways we think not of, nor can we trace, it goes forth on its mission, bringing in the Kingdom of God upon earth.

BELFAST DOMESTIC MISSION.

The Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting in connection with the Domestic Mission to the Poor of Belfast was held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, on Monday evening, March 9th—Mr. Bowman Malcolm presiding over a satisfactory attendance.

Miss Charlotte Bruce, secretary, read the report of the Committee, and also reports of the Mission institutions. The Committee's report stated that the work had been carried on during the year to their entire satisfaction under the zealous care of Mr. and Mrs. Woolley, who had devoted their time unstintingly to advancing its interests, and had made the meetings and classes attractive and instructive to young and old. Thanks to the careful management of the treasurer they had kept out of debt. They were much pleased to receive a donation of £50 from the sum left by Lady Harland for division among the charities in the city. They regretted the death of Mr. John Nelson, who had been for some time a teacher in their Sunday-school, and who had taken a great interest in the work.

The reports of the various institutions showed that excellent work had been done in the different departments of effort, and had produced the best results. Many friends had assisted with generous donations.

Mr. Hugh Erskine read the report of the Provident Fund, which appeared to have been the means of doing a considerable amount of good, and the Treasurer submitted a satisfactory financial statement.

Rev. F. Woolley (missionary), in a report dealing with the work of the Mission, said their congregation was a united one, and possessed a growing spirit and enterprise which spoke of a devotion to the highest ideals in life Much self-sacrifice had been shown by those who took part in carrying on the effort. Their losses by death and emigration had been greater than last year, and an overwhelming amount of sickness had manifested itself. The old unreasoning prejudice was breaking down, and they had broken on new ground, but they were not able to utilise it to the fullest extent for lack of labourers. The work of the Sunday-school, the Guild, the Band of Hope, and other branches of the Mission was reviewed, and the hope was expressed that it would receive increased financial support in the future. All cases of applications for assistance were strictly investigated, but the best results were obtained by house-to-house visitation. That side of the Domestic Mission was firm and sure. (Applause.)

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the reports, complimented Mr. Woolley on the extent and success of his efforts. He himself had seen some of the results of the work, and he thought they reflected great credit upon the Mission. (Applause.)

Rev. A. Turner, in seconding the resolution, said the reports were all excellent, and were presented to the meeting in a businesslike manner. There was a very healthy note sounding from the beginning to the end of Mr. Woolley's report. (Applause.)

Rev. Dr. Rattray, Liverpool, supported the resolution, and in the course of his remarks the speaker referred in complimentary terms to the work carried on by Mr. Woolley. He then gave an interesting account of the activities of the domestic missions in Liverpool, and of the prominent part that many of the principal citizens of Liver-

pool take in that work. Concluding, he appealed for further personal support for the Mission in Belfast, and wished it every success.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Rev. E. H. Pickering moved—"That we acknowledge gratefully the services of Mr. and Mrs. Woolley, and assure them of our continued confidence and sympathy in their often difficult and arduous work." The resolution was seconded by Mr. F. W. Rea and passed

On the motion of Mr. A. M'I. Cleland, seconded by Mr. Robert Dickson, the volunteer workers, especially Dr. Malcolm Brice Smyth, who had so efficiently helped the Mission, were heartily thanked.

The committees—the Managing Committee and the Ladies' Committee—were re-elected, on the motion of Mr. Harold Thomas, seconded by Mr. Eustace Gordon' and, Mr. Malcolm having been thanked by Rev. H. J. Rossington for presiding.

The proceedings concluded with the benediction.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

By Rev. E. H. Pickering, B.A.

The Kingdom of Israel.

VI. The Meeting of Saul and David. 1. Samuel, xvi. 14-23. *Memory verse,* 1. Samuel xvi. 23—"David took the harp and played with his hand, so that Saul was refreshed."

Points. 1. *Saul's madness.* The responsibilities of government and his frequent mistakes so preyed on Saul's mind that he became subject to violent fits of madness. Compare Shakespeare, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

2. *The affection of his servants.* They suggest the music cure, *e.g.,* the great musician Wagner and the mad Prince Ludwig. Shakespeare, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast."

3. *David's fame as a musician.* No doubt the importance of music in Jewish Church (*e.g.* Psalms) is due largely to him, although it is doubtful if he wrote any of the Psalms we have. He bears a resemblance in the matter of music to King James I. of Scotland, who was a musician and poet. But he was most unfortunate; not so David.

The lesson is the influence of beautiful and spiritual things on minds distressed. Music, in a general sense, stands for all that is spiritual in life—religion, art, literature, etc. We should, by means of good behaviour, good books, good company, good thoughts, make ourselves musical, or shall we say harmonious?

Then we could help the distressed, *e.g.,* the sweet influence of Jesus on the sick and suffering and distraught. Note also the hymn in our Sunday School hymn book, "If you have a pleasant thought, sing it."

VII. David and Goliath. 1. Samuel, xvii. 1-54. *Memory verse,* 1. Samuel, xvii. 47, "The battle is the Lord's.

This lesson is so long that there is not much time for comments.

Points. 1. *Verse* 28. David's youthful wrath against the Philistine giant finds no favour with his brethren; but Saul hears of his words and sends for him.

2. *Verses* 39 *and* 40. He refused the weapon he could not manage, and chose his own simple one. There is no need of elaborate weapons, heavy armour, and gorgeous uniforms to be brave. We can do good without making a fuss. Peter the hermit led the crusaders to the Holy Land by his religious zeal. Florence Nightingale, by her helpful charity, was of more use than a great general.

3. *Verses* 46 *and* 47. David's deep trust in God.

4. *Verse* 51. The Philistines fled when they saw their champion killed. In fighting evil, especially evil in ourselves, let us first kill the greatest evil, then the rest will be easy. If only we slay the giant selfishness, then his whole army of anger, lies, enmities, impurities, etc., will soon be put to flight.

VIII. David and Jonathan. 1. Samuel, xvii. 55—xviii. 5. *Memory verse.* 1 Samuel xviii. 1. "And Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

This lesson gives a beautiful picture of true friendship.

Points. 1. *"Whose son art thou?"* The first thing this question shows is that a young man was only known by means of his father's name. This would tend to make him proud of home and parents. *e.g.*, fifth Commandment. Also, it shows that David was evidently very little known. But deliverance may often come from the unknown, the small and the insignificant. *e.g.*, the lion and the mouse; also, the story of Joan of Arc.

2. *Jonathan loved him as his own soul.* This is the only true kind of love. It means giving and doing your best to make your friend truly good. It also means giving up yourself for your friend's sake. *e.g.*, story of Damon and Phintias, two young Syracusan nobles. Phintias had been unjustly condemned to death, but got permission to go abroad and arrange some important business before the date of execution, Damon giving himself into custody as a pledge. Phintias was delayed, and arrived only just in time to save Damon from death. The tyrant who had condemned Phintias was so struck by the noble friendship, one friend showing himself willing to die as the other's pledge, the other hurrying back to death to save him, that he pardoned Phintias, and so both young men were made happy.

3. *Jonathan's gifts.* He gave his robe and other things to David. That is the nature of true companionship—giving up one's own and sharing with a friend. The word "companion" means one who shares bread with you. But to be good companions, we should share not only bread, but food for the soul, good thoughts, sweet influence.

4. *David's wise behaviour.* He did not take advantage of being a friend of the king's son, but did his duty.

IX. David and Saul. 1. Samuel, xviii. 6-16. *Memory verse,* 1. Samuel, xviii. 12, "And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him."

Points. 1. *The women's song of welcome.* They saw clearly that David was the better man, for by his faith and daring he had certainly saved Israel. Hence, Saul foolishly envied him. Therefore, Saul loved neither David nor what was good as he ought. For "Love envieth not." Doing good demands the same rule as playing a game. We have to play, not for ourselves, but for our side. Compare the beautiful behaviour of John the Baptist when Jesus appeared—Mark i. 4-8. They were both fighting for the same cause.

2. *Saul tries to kill David,* but David escapes, bearing no malice against his mad master. Then Saul realised how great David was—"that the Lord was with him," especially when having given David a post of danger, he saw that he did his duty faithfully, and turned what was an evil scheme of Saul's into a good result. Then we read "Saul stood in awe of him."

Reports.

Ballyhemlin.—A very pleasant social evening was spent at the Orange Hall Ballyhalbert, on Wednesday evening, February 25th, in connection with the congregation and Sunday School. The children sang action songs, which were skilfully rendered, under the guidance of Miss Ritchie. A substantial tea was provided. The gathering was a large one, and the social was one of the most successful in recent years.

Belfast : First Church.—The annual concert, under the auspices of the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, was held on 11th March, in the Central Hall, when, despite the inclemency of the weather, there was a good attendance. The promoters deserve commendation for the taste displayed in the arrangement of the programme. It was just long enough to be enjoyable, and the encores were not too frequent. The proceeds were in aid of the Sunday School library and the Dorcas Society. Mr. Wilfred Layton, F.R.C.O., the talented organist of the church, in addition to playing the accompaniments for the vocalists, conducted the ladies' choir, and in their singing, careful training and beautiful tone qualities were demonstrated. Their items were "Laudate Pueri" (Mendelssohn), "Doubt not Thy Father's Care" (Elgar), "Ophelia" (H. Berlioz),

"Cradle-song" (Sidney Homer), and "The Lotus-Flower" (Rubenstein). The accompaniments in the items by the choir were tastefully played by Mrs. Layton. Miss L. Savage was heard to advantage in "The Smile of Spring" (Percy E. Fletcher), but perhaps her best number was "The Parting Hour" (Ellen Wright), which was bracketed with another by the same author, "Spring Again." Mr. J. R. Moore sang "The Outlaw of Loch Lene" (Charles Wood), but was undoubtedly more effective in Liza Lehmann's song, "Myself when Young," and the audience demanded an encore, to which he responded. A similar result attended the efforts of Miss M. Hampton, who rendered "Villanelle" (Eri Dell'Acqua) with exquisite effect, and subsequently interpreted very impressively "The Wood Pigeon" and "The Owl" (Liza Lehmann). Mr. J. A. Laird used a fine voice to perfection in the songs "Birds in the High Garden" (Somervell) and "Rolling Down to Rio" (German), and at a later stage secured a well-deserved encore for Aicken's popular number "Sigh no More, Ladies." All present listened with pleasure to Miss M. Prenter's singing of "A Wond'rous Mystery" (Franz Ries), but she threw more ardour into the items "Requiem" (Sidney Homer) and "I Love the Jocund Dance" (H. Walford Davies), and for the latter was recalled. The proceedings terminated with the singing of the National Anthem.

Belfast: York Street.—A social and farewell party was held in the Lecture Hall of the above church on Monday evening, March 2nd, when Miss Mahon was made the recipient of a beautiful china tea set from the members of the church. The occasion was taken advantage of to express the esteem and affection in which she was held by her many friends in York Street, and to signalise her approaching marriage. After the tea tables had been cleared away, Mr. D. Ervine (secretary of the church), who presided over a representative attendance, said they were all very sorry to lose such a faithful and devoted member, but at the same time they heartily congratulated her on the important step she was about to take. She had been an earnest and willing worker in all matters connected with the church for many years, and every scheme for the furtherance of its interests and welfare found in her a loyal supporter. When the idea of giving her a present was mooted, it was very heartily taken up by all concerned, and he was pleased to see the gift Miss Mahon was about to receive. They all wished her the greatest possible happiness in the new sphere she was about to enter. Mr. J. J. Bell associated himself with the congratulations to Miss Mahon, and wished her every happiness and success in the future. Mr. A. J. Parkes having made the presentation, Mr. A. M. Bell, on behalf of Miss Mahon, suitably replied. The musical programme, which was of a miscellaneous and most entertaining character, was interspersed with various games and dances. The following were the contributors:—The Misses S. Allen and N. Ferris, Messrs. Ervine, Ferris, and Parkes. Mr. Parkes acted as accompanist. The proceedings were kept going till a fairly late hour, and when all had enjoyed themselves to the full, the singing of Auld Lang Syne brought a delightful and most successful evening to a close.

Greyabbey and Glenarm.—At Greyabbey, where the late Rev. John Miskimmin was the devoted pastor of our congregation for over 30 years, the news of Mrs. Miskimmin's death was received with regret. At the service on Sunday, March 1st, the Rev. Alex. O. Ashworth referred in feeling terms to the loss. He had known her for over forty years. She had far outlived the span of time allotted, and for some months had been in great weakness. He was thankful she had a devoted daughter, who never forgot or neglected her duty to her mother, and when the prostration of old age indicated the end was approaching, she tended her with loving and unremitting care, and we all are grateful that in her last days everything which filial affection could suggest was done to fill those days with

rest and peace. At the request of the Committee of the Greyabbey congregation, Mr. Ashworth conveyed expressions of sympathy with her son and daughter—the Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A., and Mrs. Robert Leith, of Glenarm.

Holywood.—The last meeting of the season of the Total Abstinence Society was held on March 10th. The attendance was small, but the programme exceedingly good. The Rev. Matthew Watkins, of Moneyrea, was the speaker, and not only gave an interesting address, but also contributed much appreciated songs. Miss May Dickson and Miss L. Murphy delighted the audience with their songs, and Mr. Thomas Shannon was loudly applauded for his recitations, grave and gay. It was generally felt that in everything but numbers the meeting was highly successful.

Templepatrick.—The annual business meeting of this congregation was held on Friday evening, 13th March, in the Roughfort School. The attendance was good, but might easily have been better. In other respects it was one of the most memorable and helpful of meetings that we have known of recent years. As usual, the ladies provided a capital tea, after which the minister, Rev. A. Turner, was moved to the chair. The chairman made a few remarks suitable to the occasion, and then called upon the secretary, Mr. John B. Moore, who presented the statement of accounts and moved their adoption, and this was seconded by the treasurer, Mr. R. Thompson. The statement of accounts showed a balance in hand. In place of the retiring members of committee, four new members were elected, viz., Dr. Campbell, Wm. Gault, Archie Thompson, and David M'Keen. Dr. Campbell addressed the meeting in a speech that will be remembered for its earnestness and helpfulness. After indicating other and better methods of attending to the business affairs of the Church, he dwelt upon the necessity for the appointment and ordination of elders, a suggestion which was, at a subsequent stage of the proceedings, acted upon, and an instruction was sent forward to the committee to deal with this matter at its earliest convenience. Passing from what might be called the department of administration, the doctor spoke serious words to the young people, urging them to observe, at every point of their lives, a high endeavour and a clean and pure conduct. In this connection he advocated for the boys the formation of scout patrols, and felt quite sure that if such a movement was set on foot it would receive the hearty support of Mrs. Campbell. The speech was listened to with closest attention, and there is no doubt but that great good will come out of it. The Rev. G. V. Crook, of Antrim, very kindly attended the meeting, and in an address joined with the chairman and Dr. Campbell in urging upon the people loyalty to their faith and an improved attendance at Sunday worship. The minister announced that a legacy of £10 had been received from the executors of the late Mrs. Kelso, to perpetuate her stipend, and steps were taken to see to its investment. Arrangements were made for special services on Easter Sunday. Mr. J. Caruth sang a song, and then, as the evening was well advanced, the minister pronounced the benediction, and the meeting closed.

Next evening, at six o'clock, the scholars of the day and Sunday schools were entertained to tea, and games, etc. About seventy (some of them old scholars) attended this meeting, and all enjoyed themselves. Prizes were given to those who had earned them in the Sunday school. Games of all sorts were indulged in up to 9 o'clock, and at intervals Mr. Samuel Barnett , ably assisted by his brother, Robert James, greatly interested the children with vocal and instrumental selections on an excellent gramophone.

MARRIAGE.

KELLY—YOUNGER—March 18th, 1914, at the Grand Hotel, Glasgow, by Rev. W. K. Smiley, B.A., assisted by Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A., and Rev. J. W. Gardner, M.A., the Rev. J. A. Kelly, of Dunmurry, Co. Antrim, to Sarah Younger, of Clyde View, West Kilbride, Ayrshire. [At home, The Glebe, Dunmurry, 3rd, 4th, and 5th June.]

DEATH.

MISKIMMIN—On Friday, 27th February, at Altmore Street, Glenarm, Agnes, relict of the late Rev. John Miskimmin, Greyabbey, Co. Down.

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Not left us by inheritance, but given
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